

NAKASEC Action Fund is sending a 2019 Virginia Statewide Candidates Survey to all candidates in districts with a significant Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voter population of over 5% that we have identified in competitive races. We hope you will spend a few minutes reviewing and completing the attached questionnaire, and return it to us by COB Friday, August 23rd. You may email your completed questionnaire to Helen Li at [hli@NakasecActionFund.org](mailto:hli@NakasecActionFund.org) or fill out the Google Form [here](#).

This survey is your opportunity to communicate in your own words what your views are on critical topics to the AAPI electorate. There are 155,000+ AAPI voters in Virginia and we will make sure that they get this information to educate and engage them in the November 2019 general election to promote more civic engagement within the AAPI community.

Formed in 2005, NAKASEC Action Fund (NAKASEC AF) engages in policy and legislative advocacy to protect and strengthen the nation's laws and policies regarding civil, immigrant and human rights. Our sister organization, NAKASEC, a 501(c)(3) organization, maintains a strong presence in Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities throughout the nation, including in Virginia.

We appreciate your time and look forward to reviewing your responses.

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**Name: Debra Rodman**

**Affordable Housing**

**1. How will you ensure that all revitalization efforts benefit and include long-time local communities, especially communities of color and non-English speaking communities? How will you ensure that revitalization efforts do not come at the expense of displacing these communities?**

Revitalization efforts frequently come at the expense of many who cannot afford the increase in taxes, thereby displacing long time residents. Incentives like tax breaks, deferred tax programs like in Richmond City, or grants to help homeowners keep up with revitalization by helping them improve their own homes need to be introduced in counties that do not currently have those programs in place. Where they are in place, they need to be supported and continued.

**2. What is your position on rent control in Virginia? What are your plans to protect tenants from evictions and rent hikes?**

I believe rent control in neighborhoods in Northern Virginia that are being affected by the recent Amazon acquisition is needed. In Central Virginia, Richmond has the highest level of evictions in the entire country, which is unacceptable. CARE, the Campaign to Reduce Evictions, is crafting new policy proposals to correct this situation and I plan to support the proposals from this group.

**Immigration**

**3. What are your views on driver licenses or driver privilege cards for all individuals who are age eligible and able to pass a driving exam, regardless of immigration status? How would you implement these types of licenses?**

I support driver privilege cards for individuals regardless of immigration status. Virginia has made several attempts at passing this legislation, and I firmly believe that in 2020, we will make this a reality.

**4. What is your position on in-state tuition for all youth who graduate from Virginia high schools, regardless of immigrations status?**

I support in-state tuition for Virginia students regardless of immigration status.

**5. What are your views on granting localities and their sheriff's departments more discretion in the processing of immigrants in jails and juvenile detention?**

I do not believe local or state law enforcement need to be acting on behalf of, or in place of ICE agents.

**Climate Change + Transportation**

**6. What are your views on new fossil fuel infrastructure in Virginia?**

I believe that we need to responsibly move away from fossil fuels and towards cleaner energy sources such as solar and wind. Efforts to re-brand the industry propelling us into a climate crisis are disingenuous.

**7. What are your top priorities for increasing environmentally friendly public transportation to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles and how do you propose to fund these priorities?**

Streets need to be safer so pedestrians and cyclists feel safe enough to bike or walk to work, run errands, go shopping, etc. To make this a reality we need to continue to fund public transportation systems, like the GRTC in Central Virginia. This reduces the number of single occupancy vehicles and takes cars off the road, making streets safer. I also believe that localities need to devote more public dollars and commit to making streets more pedestrian centered, rather than centered around single occupancy cars.

**8. How will you ensure that all workers are able to commute to work in a way that is fair and equitable?**

Right now, GRTC is struggling to reach those customers who need it the most. We need to provide more funding for more frequent routes to reach those individuals where they are, and bring them to where the jobs are located, which is mostly in Short Pump, and Chesterfield county.

**Healthcare**

**9. Virginia recently passed Medicaid expansion. However, there are still many residents of Virginia who do not have health insurance. If elected, what are your top priorities to further expand healthcare access?**

We should be incentivizing competition that keeps more people in the comprehensive insurance pool — not allowing loopholes and ‘catastrophic’ skinny plans that undermine comprehensive coverage and are not required to cover pre-existing conditions or benefits such as prescription drugs.

I was disappointed Medicaid passed with work requirements, which will begin to roll back much of the progress we have made making health care more accessible. When Democrats take the majority I plan to ensure we will make it a priority to resolve this.

**10. What are your views on allowing legal permanent residents who have lawfully resided in the U.S. for more than five years to become eligible for Medicaid, if they meet all other eligibility requirements?**

I support legal residents becoming eligible for Medicaid if they meet all other requirements.

**11. What are your views on expanding Virginia's FAMIS program to undocumented children?**

I support expanding the FAMIS program to undocumented children.

**Education**

**12. What are your plans for addressing the increasing costs of college in Virginia?**

Virginia needs to keep incentivizing the higher education institutions that are already keeping the cost of tuition low. This past session during budget negotiations, the Republican leadership tried to remove \$15 million from the budget for HBCUs and universities that serve higher proportions of first-generation college students (think - VSU, VCU, JMU). These are schools that are keeping costs down. They tried to do this by making it look like they were adding \$45 million into the budget, when in reality they were merely moving money around and diverting money away from the VSU and VCUs towards the UVA and W&Ms. I stood on the floor of the house and called this plan out for what it was, and got the \$15 million back into the budget. We need to be vigilant in keeping a close eye on our funding models and making sure aid goes towards schools keeping costs down and serving students that need it.

**13. Virginia is currently investing in a "Tech-Talent Pipeline" for STEM education in both K-12 and in state college programs. However, we recognize that students and youth should also be supported in their educational pursuits outside of STEM. What is your plan for supporting students who choose non-STEM interests both in K-12 and in college programs?**

I have a masters degree in Marine Science and policy, and am an anthropologist professionally. Emphasizing the importance of keeping STEM interdisciplinary is essential. STEM and non-STEM classes can work together to teach our students to think critically, write clearly, and become a well rounded, wonderful member of society. There are a lot of efforts to push our curriculums to be more STEM heavy, but we need to ensure this is being matched in a way that incorporates the liberal arts. I think programs like CodeVA do this well, where Computer Science education begins in high school and taught non-exclusive to programming, but to a way that involves broader concepts and other subjects -- storytelling, art, etc.

**13. What are your views on universal childcare and universal pre-K?**

I support universal childcare and pre-K.

**14. What are your views on free meal programs in our public schools?**

I support free meal programs in public schools for all children, regardless of financial status. This would reduce the stigma that students feel, and minimizes food insecurity. We know that food insecurity is not just a poverty problem, but it can affect everybody, regardless of how close to the poverty level a family is. For some, food insecurity is one major injury or other catastrophic financial event away. 13.2% of children in Virginia are food insecure, and with this comes social and developmental ramifications. Providing students with free meals in school can alleviate this issue.

## Racial Equity

**15. The scandals surrounding state leadership in early 2019 illuminated the long way that Virginia has to go especially in the realm of anti-black racism and sexual violence. If elected, what are the top policies or initiatives that you will champion to promote a more just and equitable Virginia?**

Racism is embedded in all our social institutions and impact peoples' everyday lives. Social institutions such as healthcare, housing, and the justice system are where we see some the most critical spaces and places of continued racism. In healthcare, we see how institutional racism has impacted women of color and resulted in disparate treatment. Women of color are more likely to receive less pain relief, more likely to die of breast and cervical cancer, and to die in childbirth. While there is so much to be done, including more bias training for physicians, one concrete plan would be for mandating hemorrhage carts in hospitals. African American women have a greater risk of death from postpartum hemorrhage than white women, so improving postpartum hemorrhage care has significant implications for improving health equity. Hemorrhage carts allows easy access to the equipment and medication required to respond immediately in obstetrical emergencies. We also see how systemic and institutional racism impacts equality in housing. Did you know that in Virginia homeowners' deeds often still have racist language? While they may not be enforced, racially discriminatory clauses in the Homeowner's Association documents or in individual real estate deeds still exist. My bill would require counties to remove all unenforceable discriminatory clauses. While more symbolic, it is very important to eradicate the history of redlining in Virginia. In terms of criminal justice, judge selection perpetuates racism as those in the dominant group tend to hire and select people that look like them (we see this in faculty hires in higher ed). We need more diverse judge hires and to make sure that judges (even if they are a diverse hire themselves) do not perpetuate the implicit bias that results in higher rates of incarceration of men of color. I will propose a more standardized process for judge selection that will eradicate backroom deals and bring more diverse viewpoints and representations.